

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-20 are pending in the above-identified application, and were rejected. Each of the rejections is respectfully traversed. Accordingly, claims 1-6 and 8-20 are at issue.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claims 1-6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fushie et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,339,197) in view of Yamamoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,057).

Claims 9-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fushie et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,339,197) in view of Yamamoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,057), Stevens (U.S. Patent No. 6,392,356) and further in view of Nakazawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,411,349).

Notwithstanding the fact that the combination of Fushie et al., Yamamoto et al., Stevens, and Nakazawa et al. does not disclose all of the elements of the independent claims, and additionally, that the Examiner has not shown there is a teaching or suggestion that would have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the asserted combinations, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamamoto et al. does not qualify as a prior art reference.

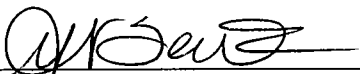
The present application claims priority to Japanese Application No. P11-271950, filed on September 27, 1999. Applicants submitted a certified translation of the application on June 9, 2003, perfecting their claim of priority. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the effective date of the present application is September 27, 1999. The priority date for Yamamoto et al. is September 7, 2000. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamamoto et al. does not qualify as a prior art reference, and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully request early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 29, 2006

By: 

Marina N. Saito
Registration No. 42,121
SONNENSCHN NATH & ROSENTHAL LLP
P.O. Box 061080
Wacker Drive Station, Sears Tower
Chicago, Illinois 60606-1080
(312) 876-8000

14520884